

KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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# AKIRA

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

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**BOOK  
ONE**

  
DARK HORSE COMICS®

translation and adaptation

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**DIGITAL CHAMELEON**

and **DARK HORSE COMICS**

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**MARK COX**



## **AKIRA BOOK ONE**

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# AKIRA

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

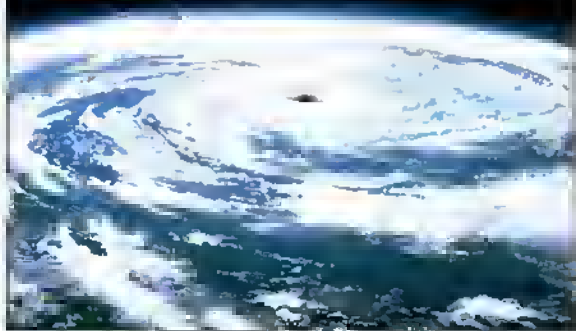


**BOOK  
ONE**



DARK HORSE COMICS™

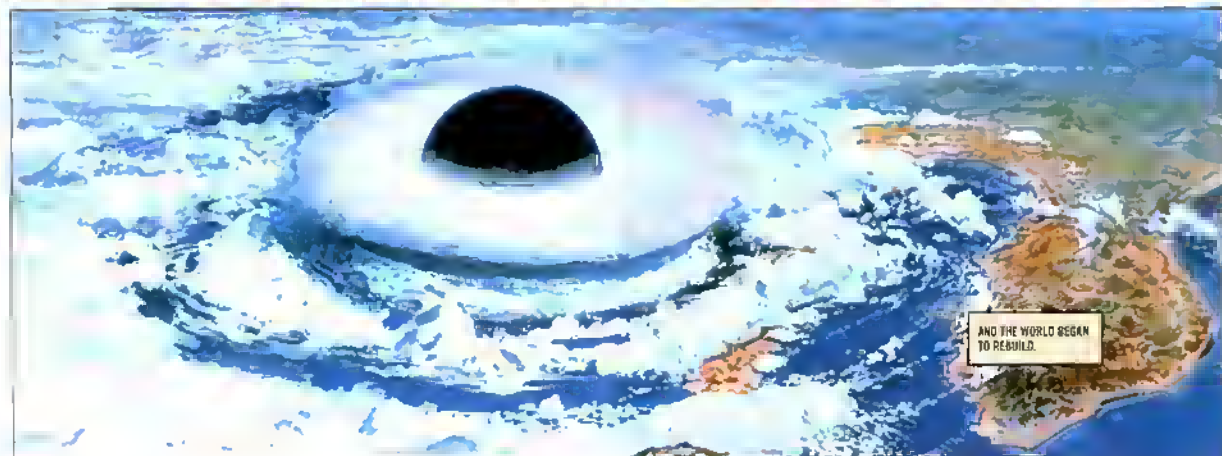
AT 2:17 P.M. ON DECEMBER 6TH, 1992,  
A NEW TYPE OF BOMB EXPLODED OVER  
THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF JAPAN.



# AKIRA

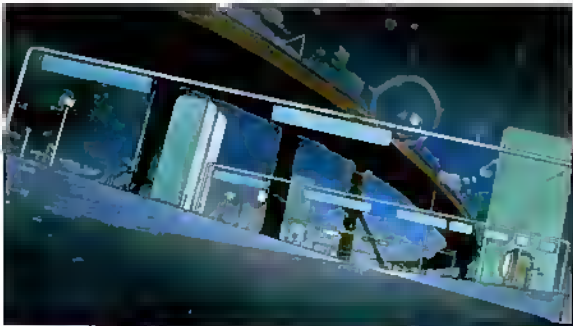
BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO



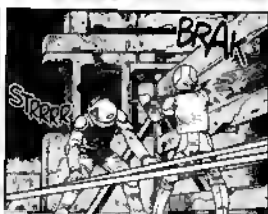
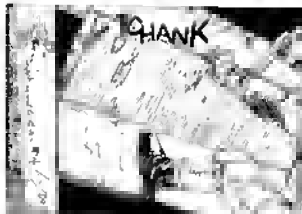
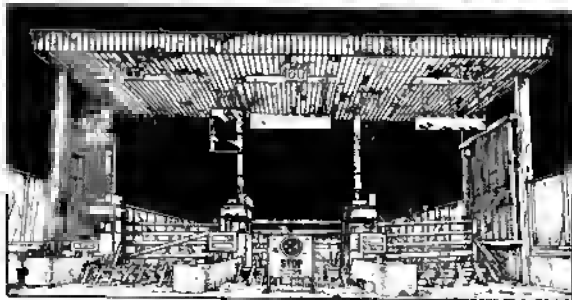
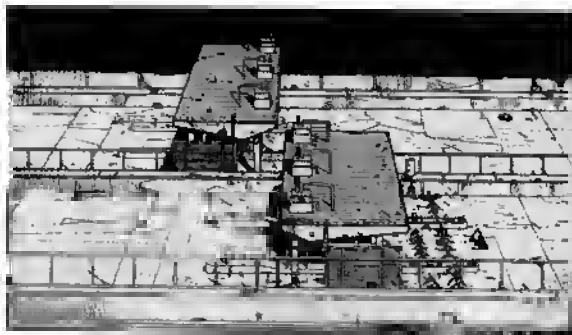




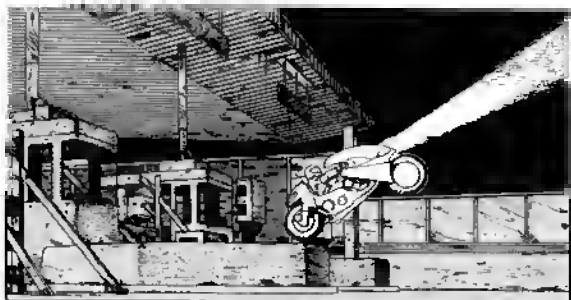
NEO-TOKYO CITY, 38 YEARS  
AFTER WORLD WAR II  
(2030 AD)





















HEY,  
WE WERE  
JUST GETTING  
INTO IT...WHY'D  
WE STOP?

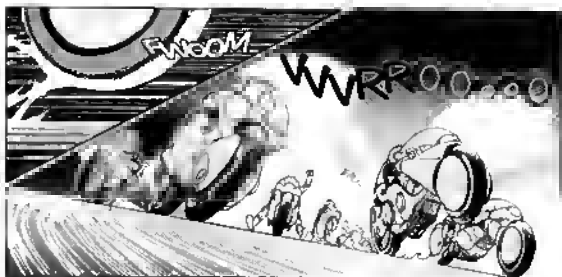
'CAUSE  
WE HIT A  
DEAD END.  
DUMMY AND  
I DO MEAN  
DEAD

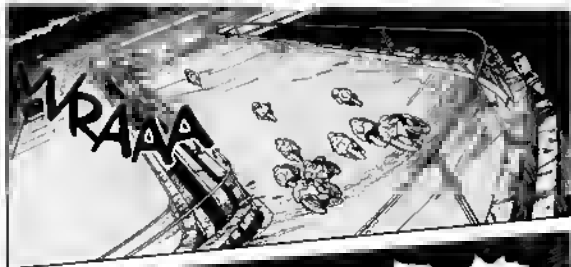
THIS IS THE  
HEART OF ALL  
THE DESTRUCTION.  
WE'RE RIGHT AT  
THE PLACE WHERE  
THE BOMBS  
FELL.

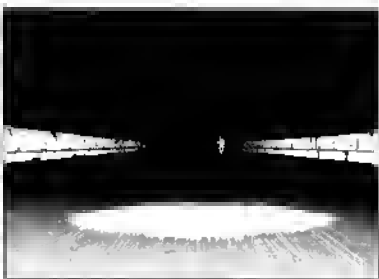
Brooo

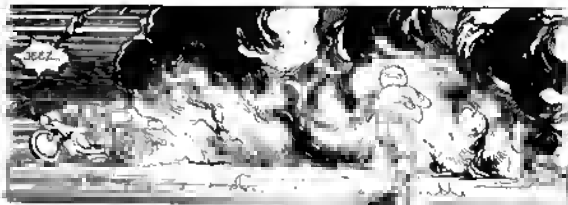
Broobro





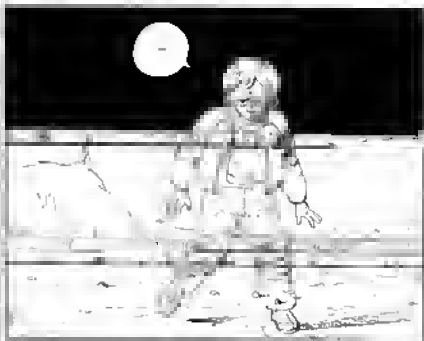








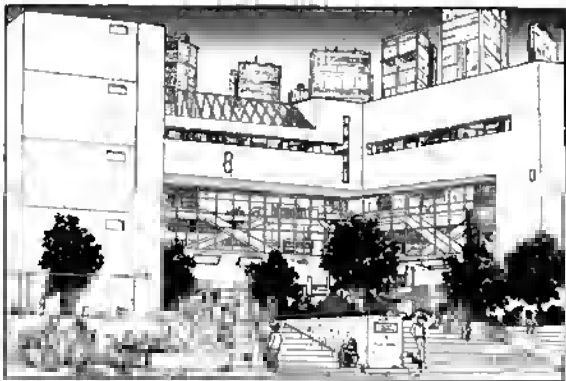




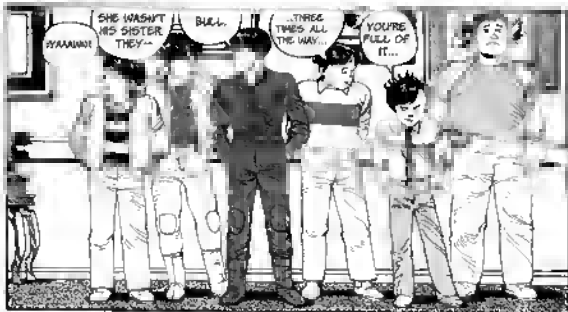


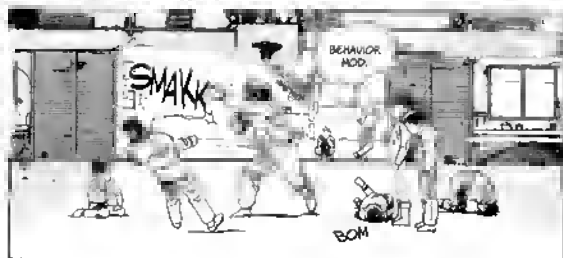






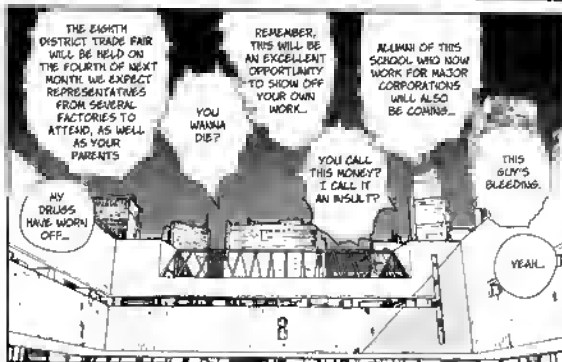


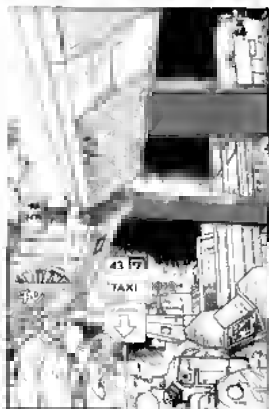






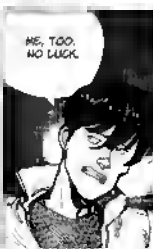












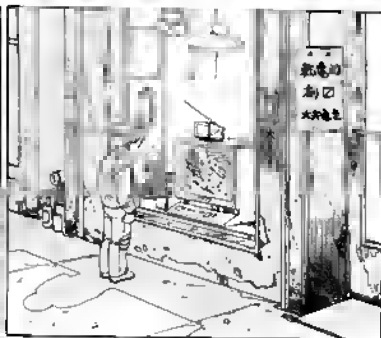










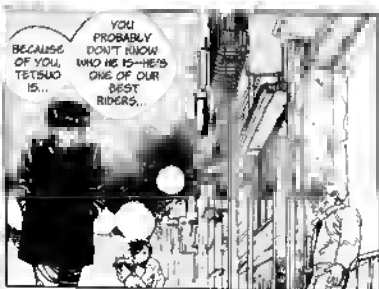


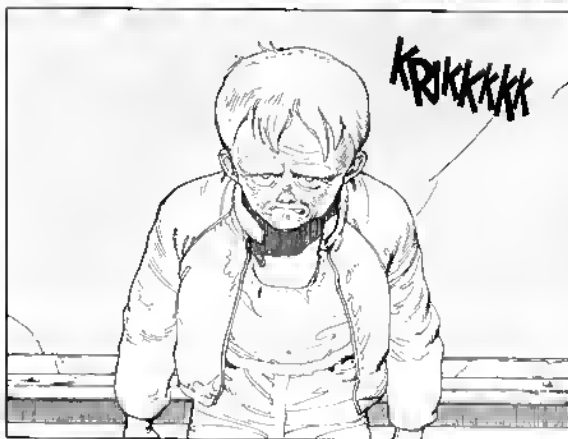






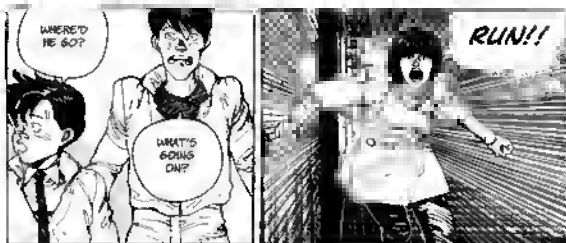
KANEDA  
...?





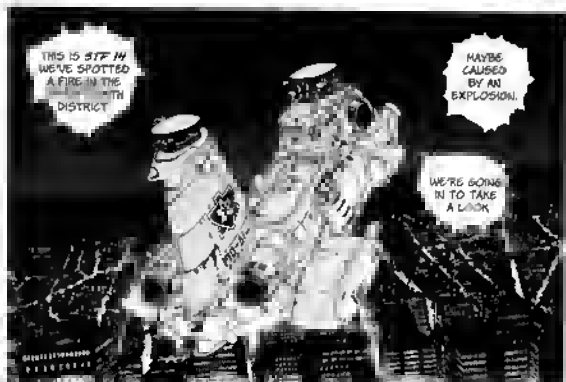


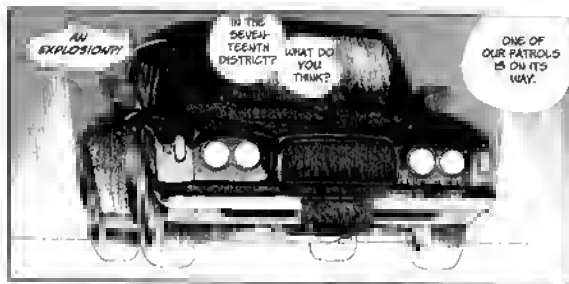


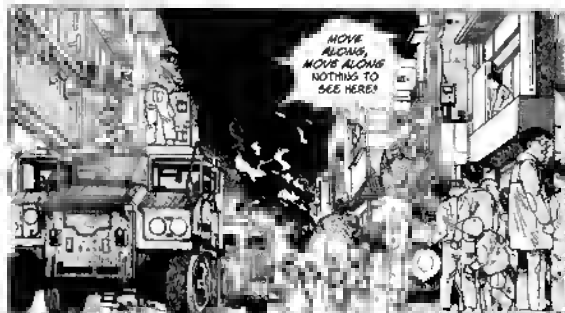




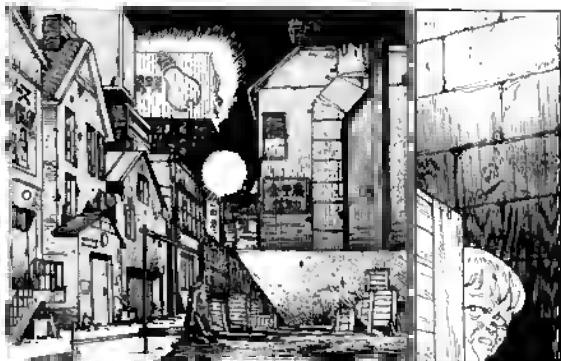




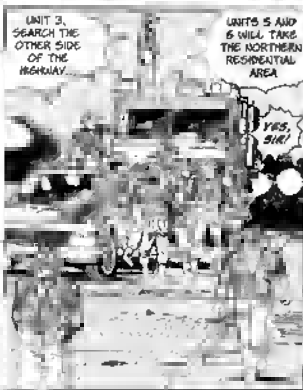












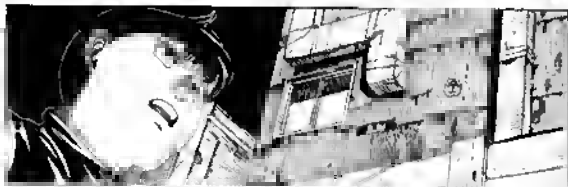




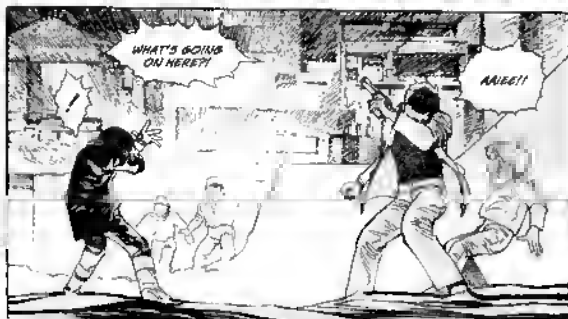


STOP IT!  
JUST COOL  
OFF,  
WOULD  
YOU?



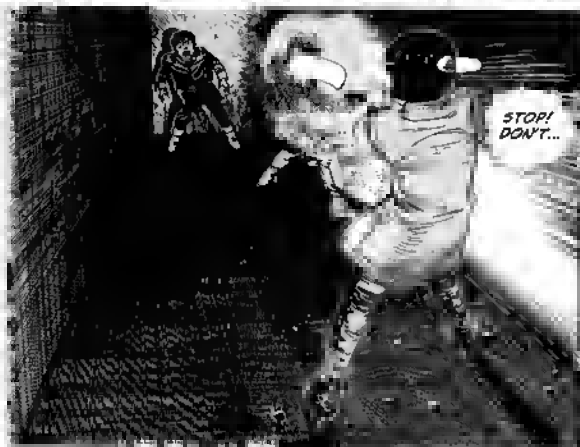






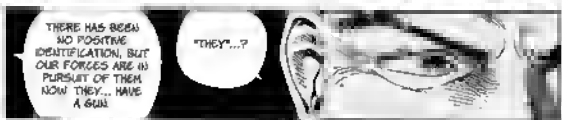
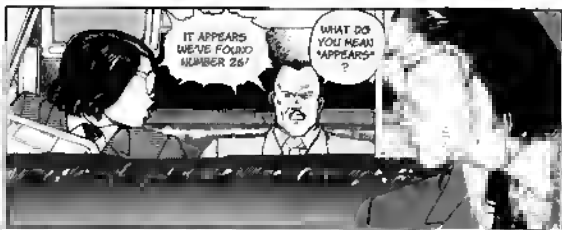








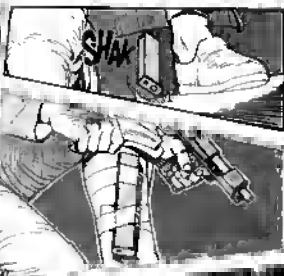




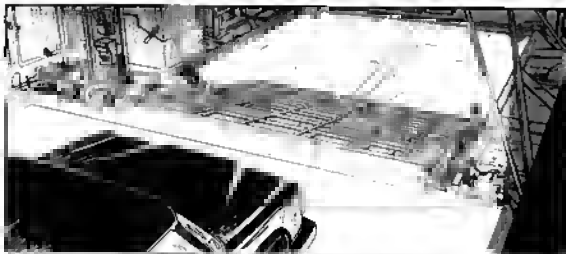




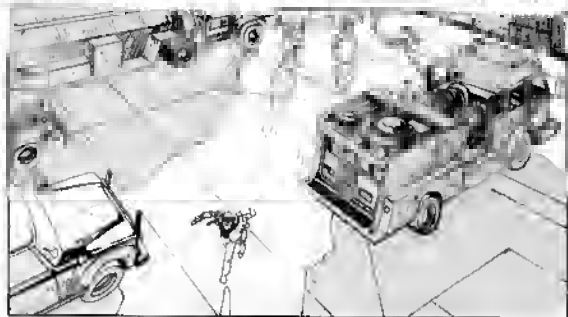
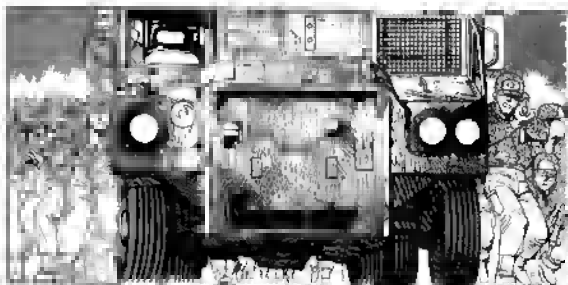


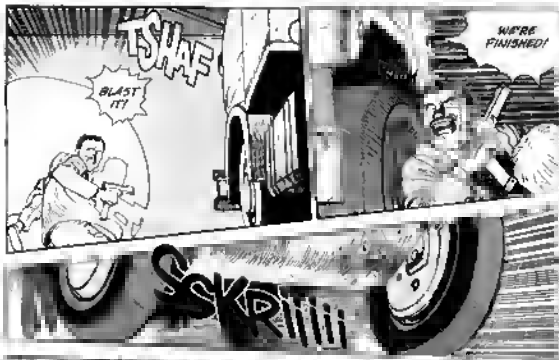








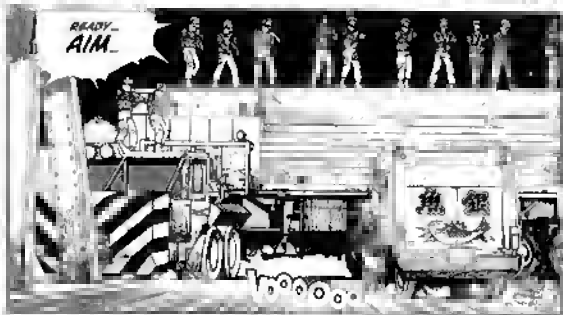
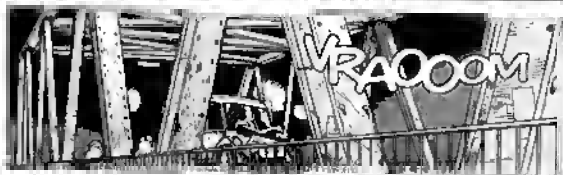










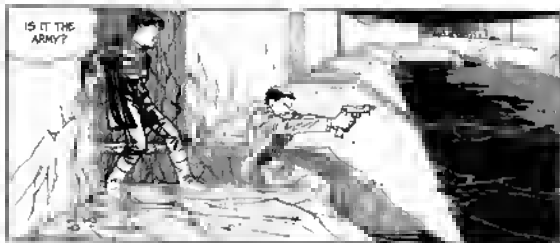
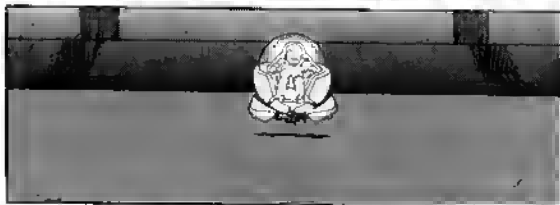


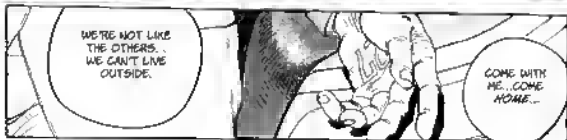
























GGAH  
188!!





COLONEL

YOU'RE  
BEING VERY  
FOOLISH.



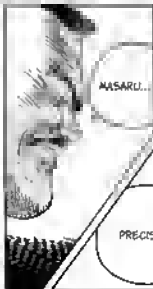
I  
DON'T  
WANT  
TO  
HEAR  
IT!

FOR SOME  
REASON, THIS  
LITTLE CREEP'S  
IMPORTANT  
TO YOU!



AND THIS GUN  
I'M HOLDING  
HAS A HAIR  
TRIGGER!

YOU STILL  
REFUSE TO  
UNDERSTAND...?  
VERY WELL...



MASARU...



COLONEL...  
TAKASAKI IS IN  
A VERY BAD  
WAY.



PRECISELY.

SPEED IS  
OF THE  
ESSENCE...  
AND GUNS  
ARE OF NO  
USE NOW.



**KNOCK OFF THE  
CHATTER UP THERE!  
IF YOU LET US GO,  
THE FREAK'S  
ALL YOURS!**



**DON'T  
WORRY...  
WE WON'T  
REALLY  
HURT  
YOU**



**SO WHAT'S IT  
GONNA BEP**



**HE NEEDS  
A CAPSULE...**



**ABSOLUTELY  
NOT!!**



**OKAY, KID...  
GET READY TO  
DO YOUR  
THING.**



**A PILL...**



...



**HASARIL...**



**TAKASHI...**







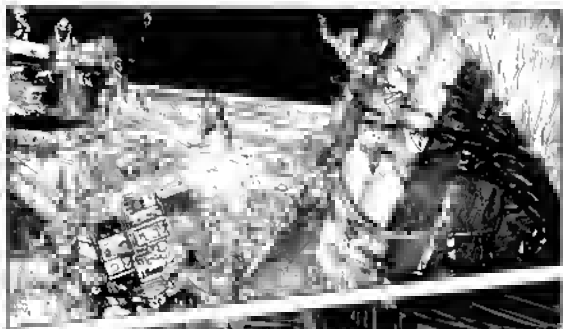


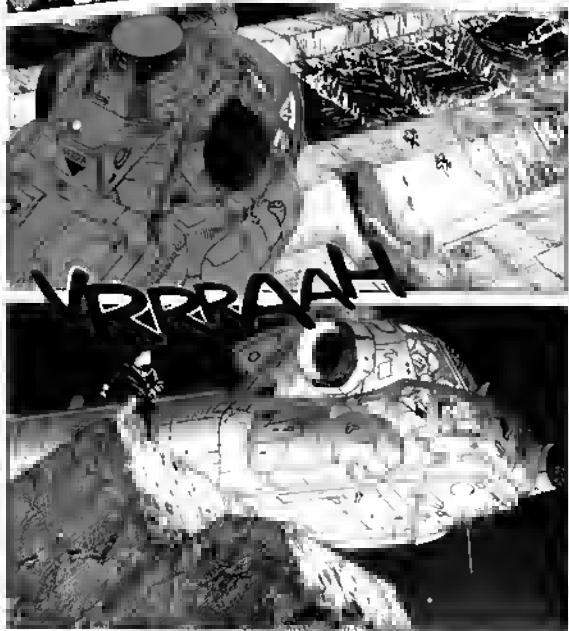


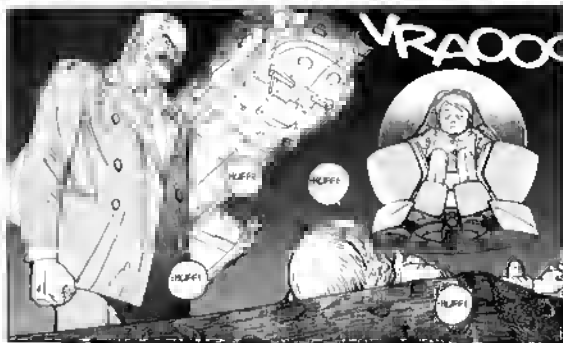




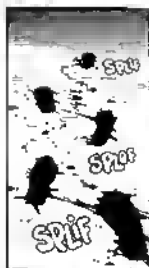




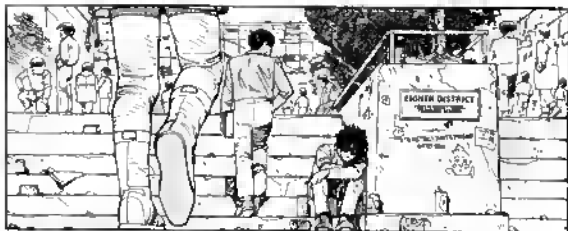


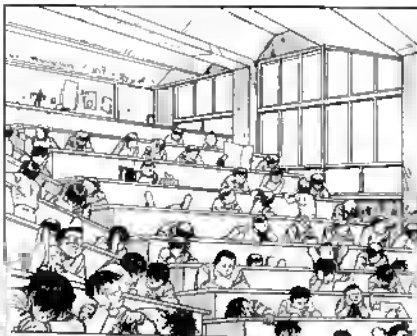












## JAPANTIMES

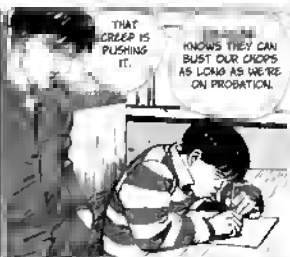
### A WEEK AFTER EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT DISASTER, CANAL REPAIRS STILL DELAYED

In the Department of Sewer-  
age that delays in the repairs  
was caused on the 18th District  
construction of the tunneling  
for an accident that happened  
because the tunneling was  
in the District. Mr. Kishida  
commented the situation  
saying "There has been a lot  
of trouble in the tunneling  
and it will be delayed by now."



Atsuyuki Saito of the Department  
of Sewerage also commented on the  
fact that the collapse of the canal was  
due to inadequate construction. "Dis-  
aster is examining the damaged  
construction in the appropriate place  
and ruling out anything at this point  
to the construction company responsible  
for the work," Saito said.







ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH SAMURAI?



COURSE NOT. JUST WITH LOSING. I'M OUT TEN BUCKS THIS WEEK.

HEY, KANEEDA, GIVE ME SOME!

I ALREADY TOLD YOU.



THE NEXT THING YOU'RE GOING TO BE OUT OF IS THIS SCHOOL... AND ON YOUR WAY TO REFORM SCHOOL.



IF THAT HAPPENS, YOUR TEETH ARE GONNA BE OUT OF YOUR MOUTH

I SUPPOSE IT'S MEDICINE

KOH KOFF

YEAH COUGH MEDICINE.



SORRY SIR I GOTTA GO!

Y'SEE, BASICALLY...

EXOM

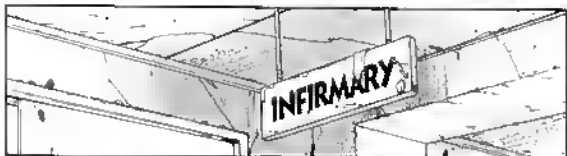


SIT DOWN, MR. KANEEDA

NEVER MIND ME, SIR. JUST GO ON WITH CLASS.

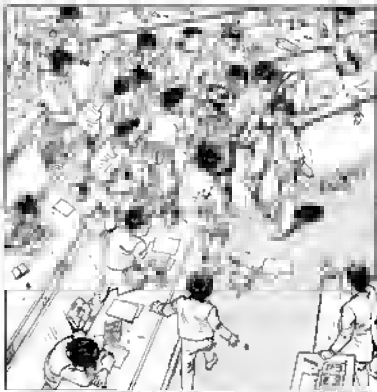


WH WH WH WHATT?



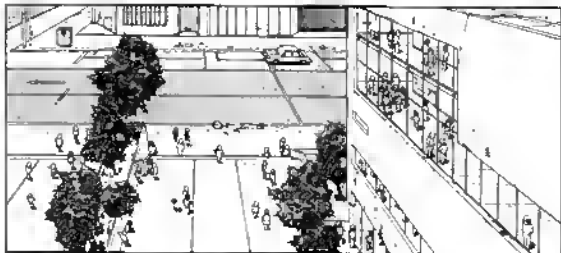














WHERE DID  
THAT STUFF  
YOU GAVE  
ME  
COME FROM?



DID YOU FIND  
OUT WHAT IT  
IS?



PART OF IT...  
BUT IT CONTAINED  
CERTAIN ELEMENTS THAT  
DEFIED ANALYSIS, AT  
LEAST BY OUR  
EQUIPMENT.



SO, DON'T  
KEEP ME IN  
SUSPENSE. THE  
GANG IS STILL  
WAITING FOR  
THEIR STUFF,  
YOU KNOW.



COMPARED TO  
WHAT WAS IN YOUR  
PILL, THOSE ARE  
CANDY ONE GRAIN IS  
FIVE TIMES AS  
POWERFUL AS THE  
ENTIRE CONTENTS  
OF THAT BAG.



WHAT?



IF SOMEONE  
TOOK THE WHOLE  
THING, HE'D GO  
MAD... OR  
DIE.



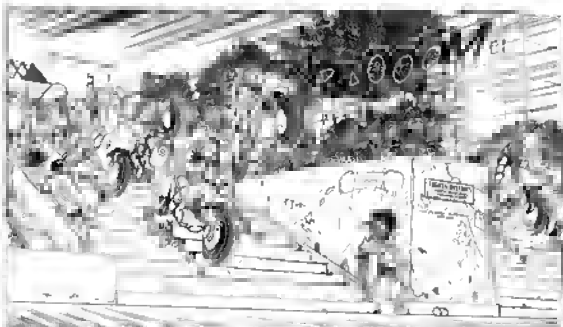
AMMM...



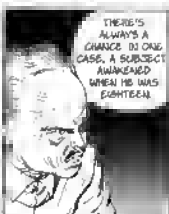
ONE  
MORE  
THING...







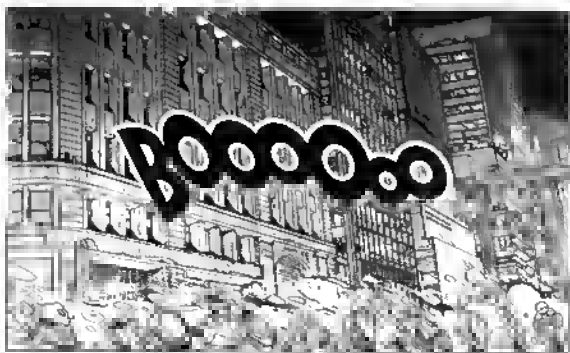
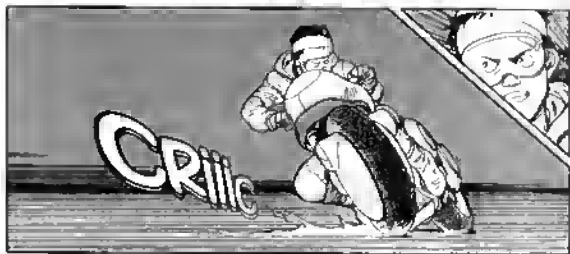


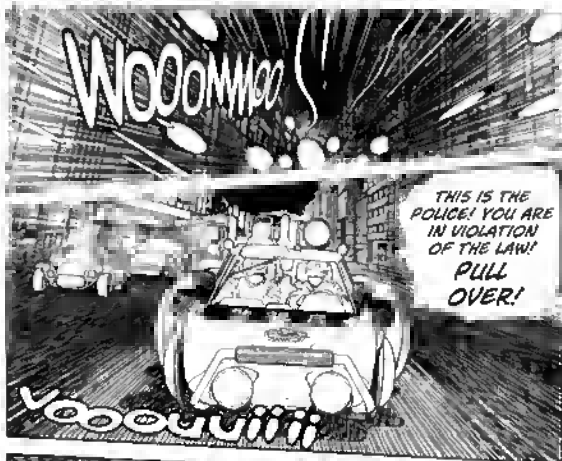








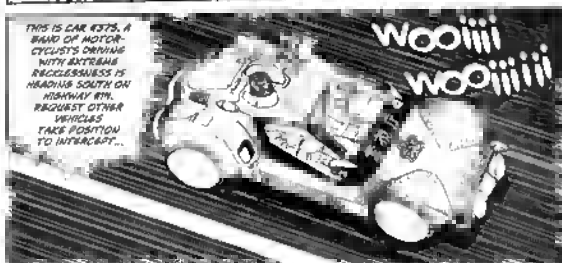




THIS IS THE  
POLICE! YOU ARE  
IN VIOLATION  
OF THE LAW!  
**PULL  
OVER!**



YOU  
WANNA  
BUST US,  
YOU HAVE  
TO WORK  
FOR IT!



THIS IS CAR #375. A  
BAND OF MOTOR-  
CYCLISTS DRIVING  
WITH EXTREME  
RECKLESSNESS IS  
HEADING SOUTH ON  
HIGHWAY 81M.  
REQUEST OTHER  
VEHICLES  
TAKE POSITION  
TO INTERCEPT...









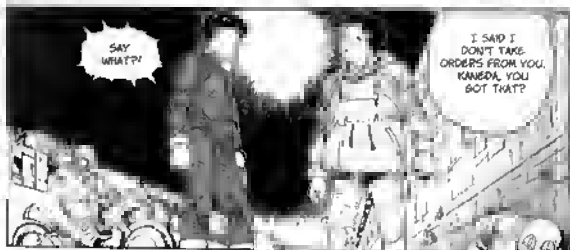








I DON'T  
TAKE ORDERS  
FROM YOU



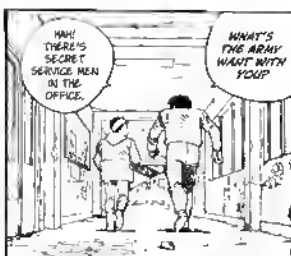
SAY  
WHAT?

I SAID I  
DON'T TAKE  
ORDERS FROM YOU,  
KANEDA. YOU  
GOT THAT?

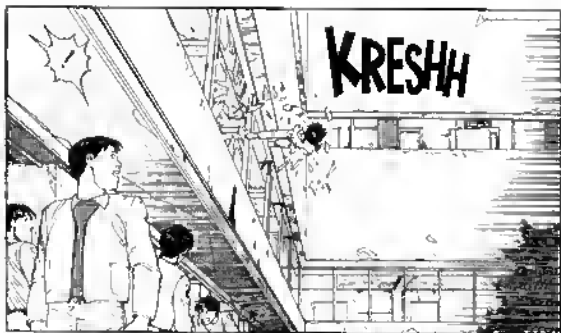




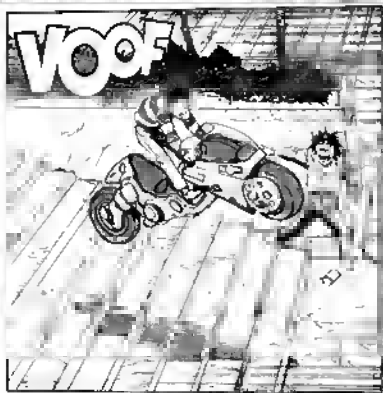
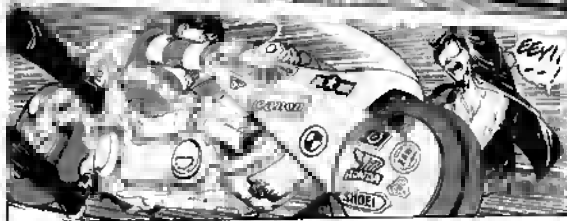


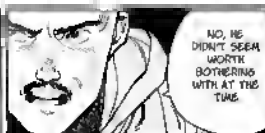
















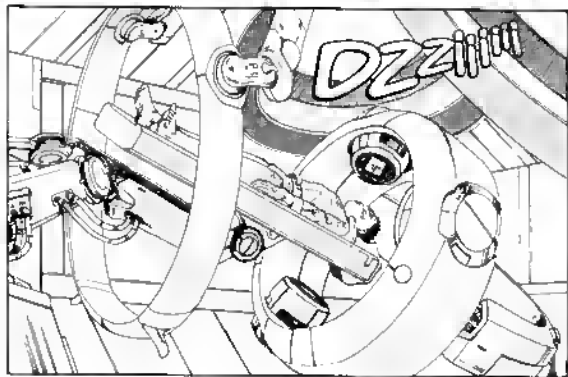
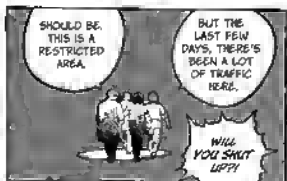


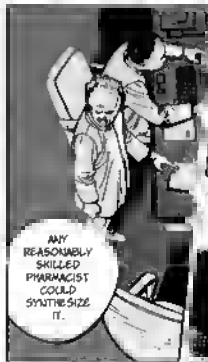


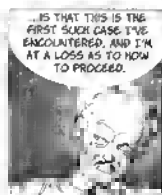




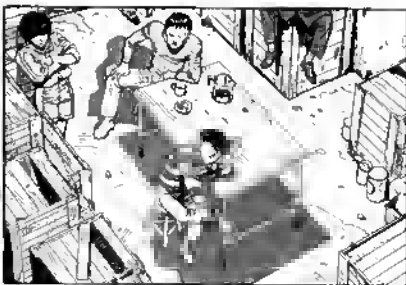


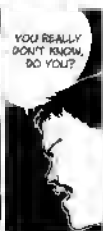


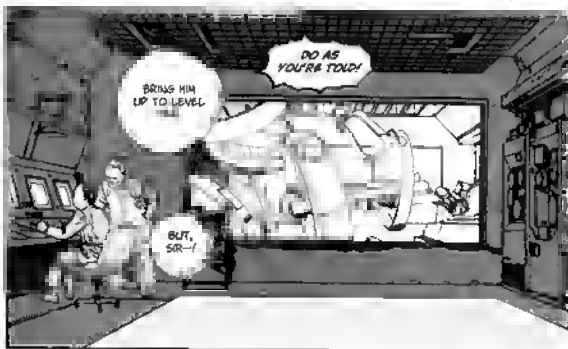
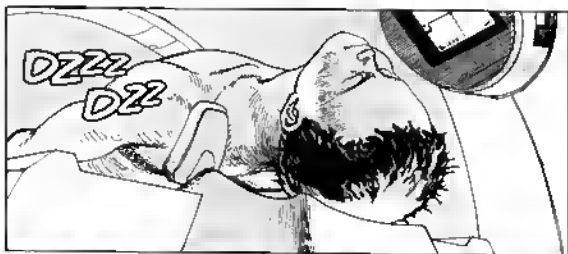






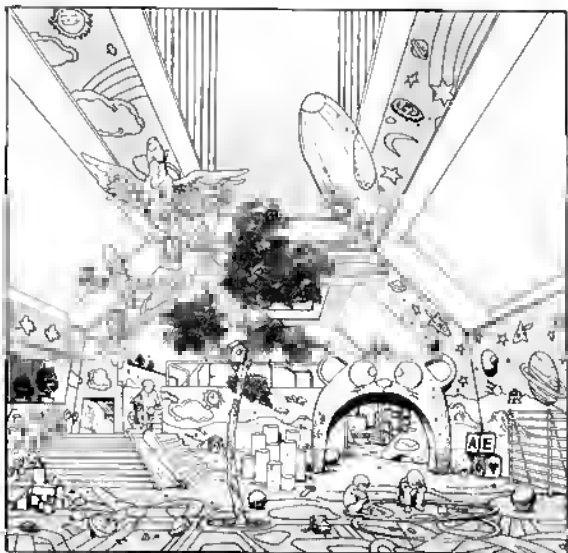










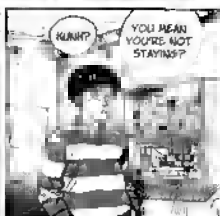








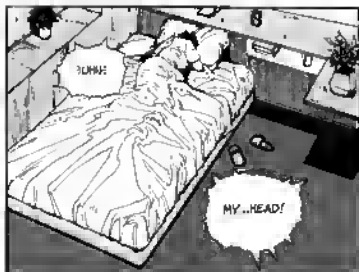


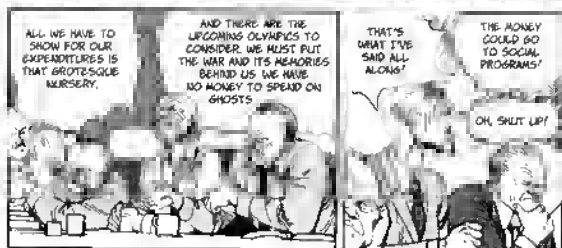
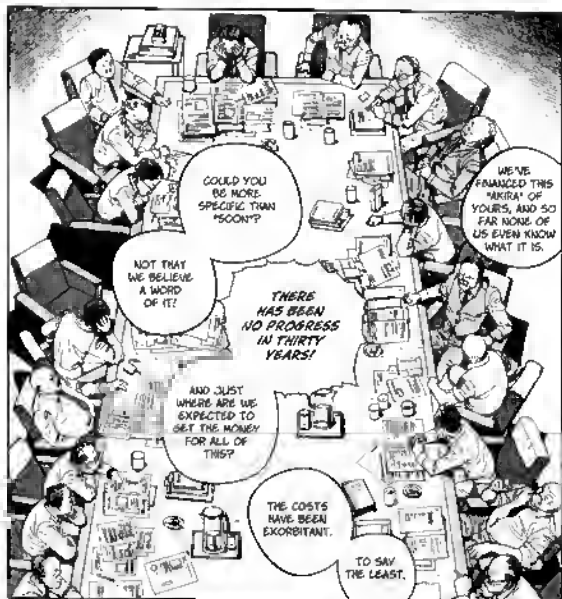


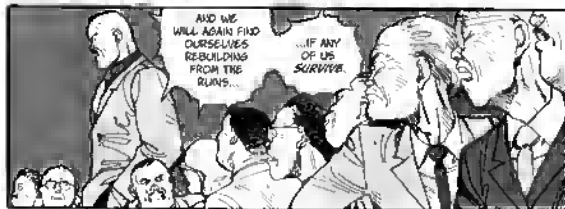










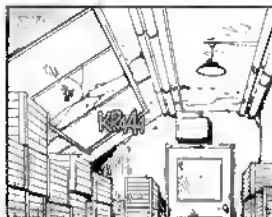




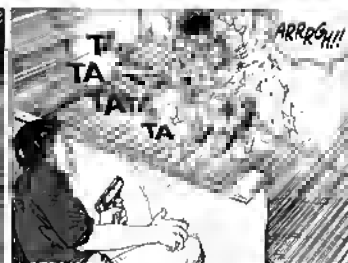


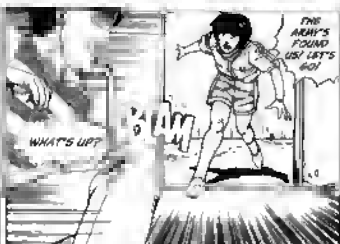


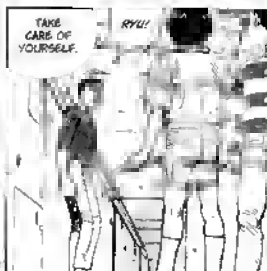




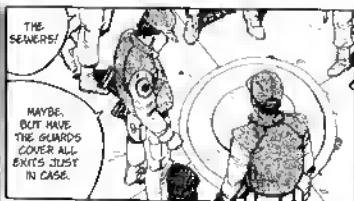


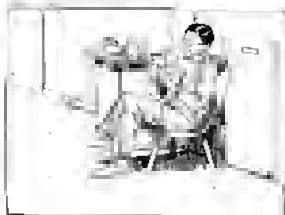
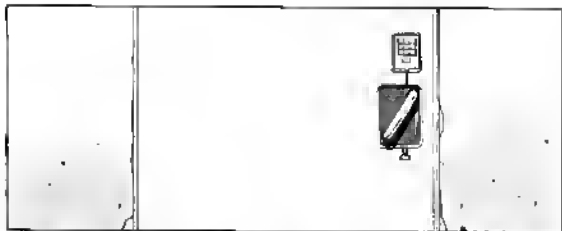
























YOUR  
OPINION?



BEYOND  
ANYTHING I  
EXPECTED!

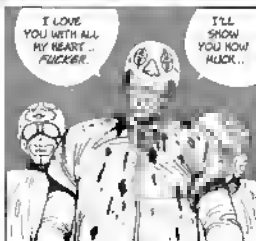
FOR HIM TO  
AWAKEN INTO  
SUCH POWER IN  
SO SHORT A  
SPAN OF  
TIME...



HE MUST BE  
INCLUDED IN THE  
SERIES AND  
ASSIGNED HIS  
OWN NUMBER.



I BELIEVE  
NUMBER 41 IS THE  
NEXT AVAILABLE  
DESIGNATION...?





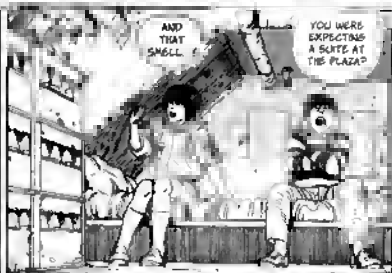








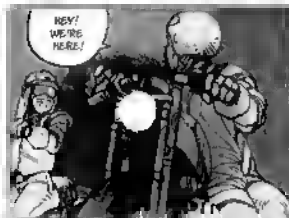




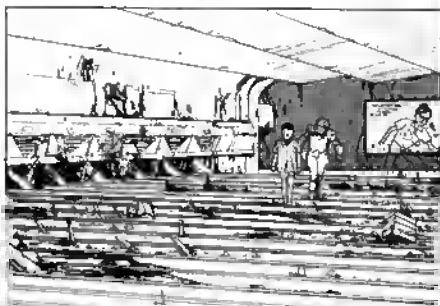












ARE YOU  
GONNA KEEP  
ME HERE ALL  
NIGHT?!



HEY! IT'S  
THAT WEIRD  
KID FROM  
BEFORE!



WHAT ARE  
YOU TALKING  
ABOUT?

WELL...  
THAT KID...  
HE...



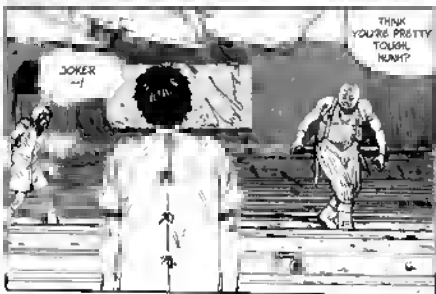
...

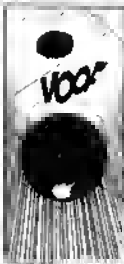


HEY  
!!!

YIHU!!!





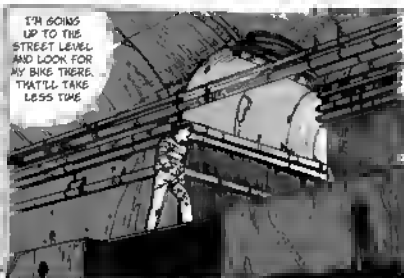




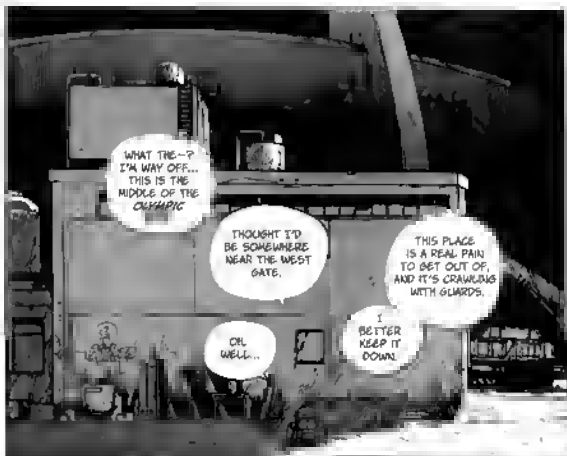
IT'S  
GOTTA BE  
AROUND HERE  
SOMEWHERE!

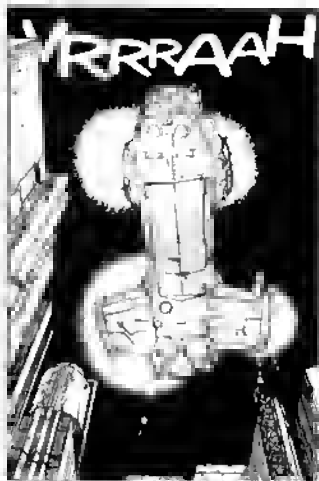


I'M GOING  
UP TO THE  
STREET LEVEL  
AND LOOK FOR  
MY BIKE THERE.  
THAT'LL TAKE  
LESS TIME

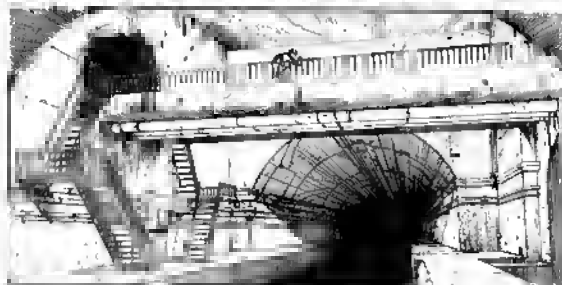




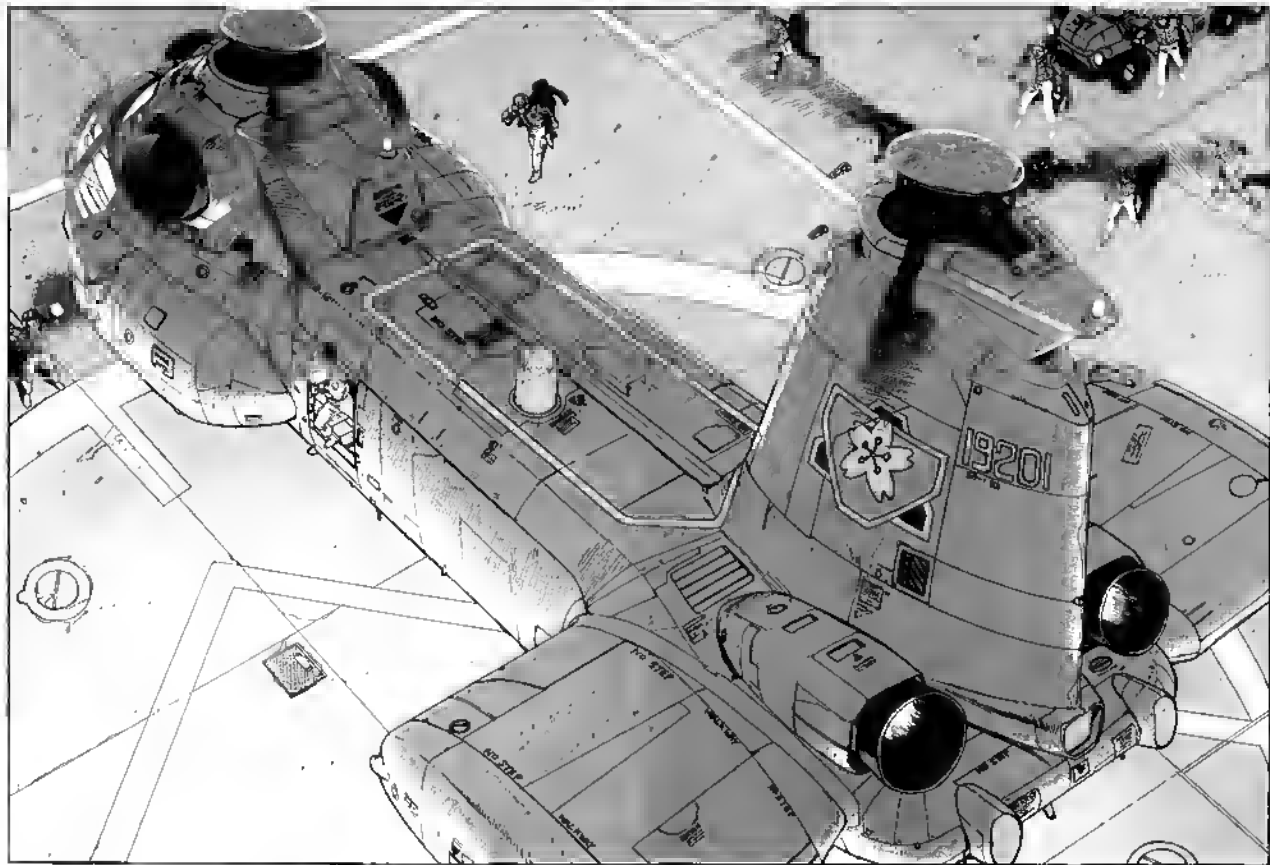


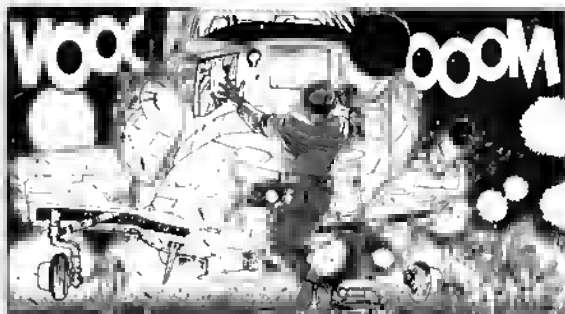








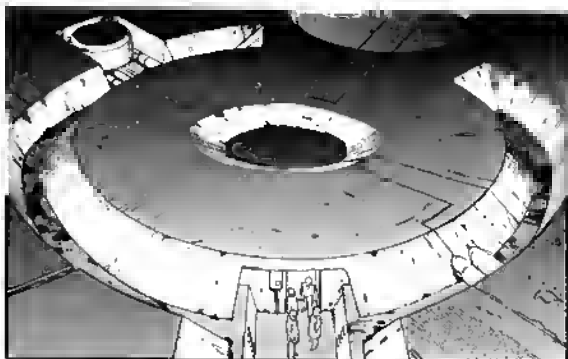


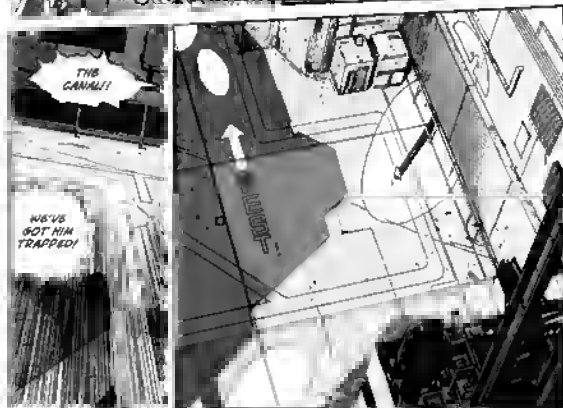








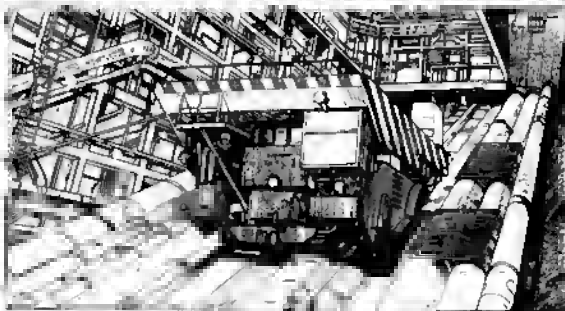
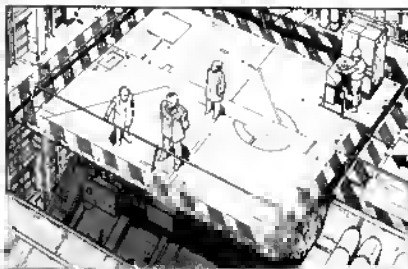


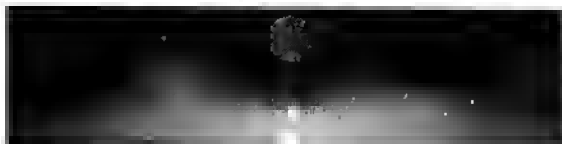


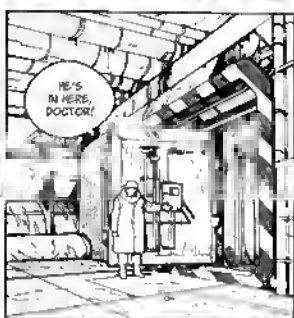
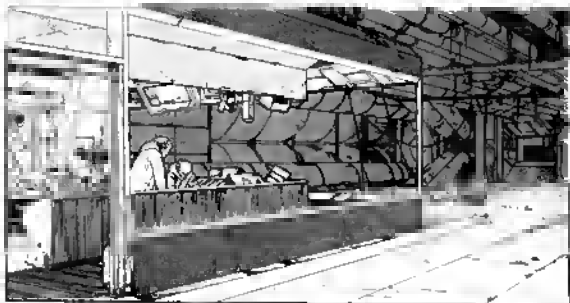




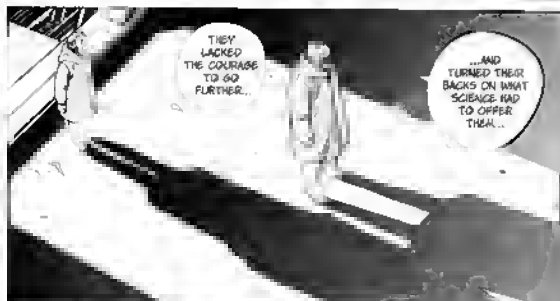


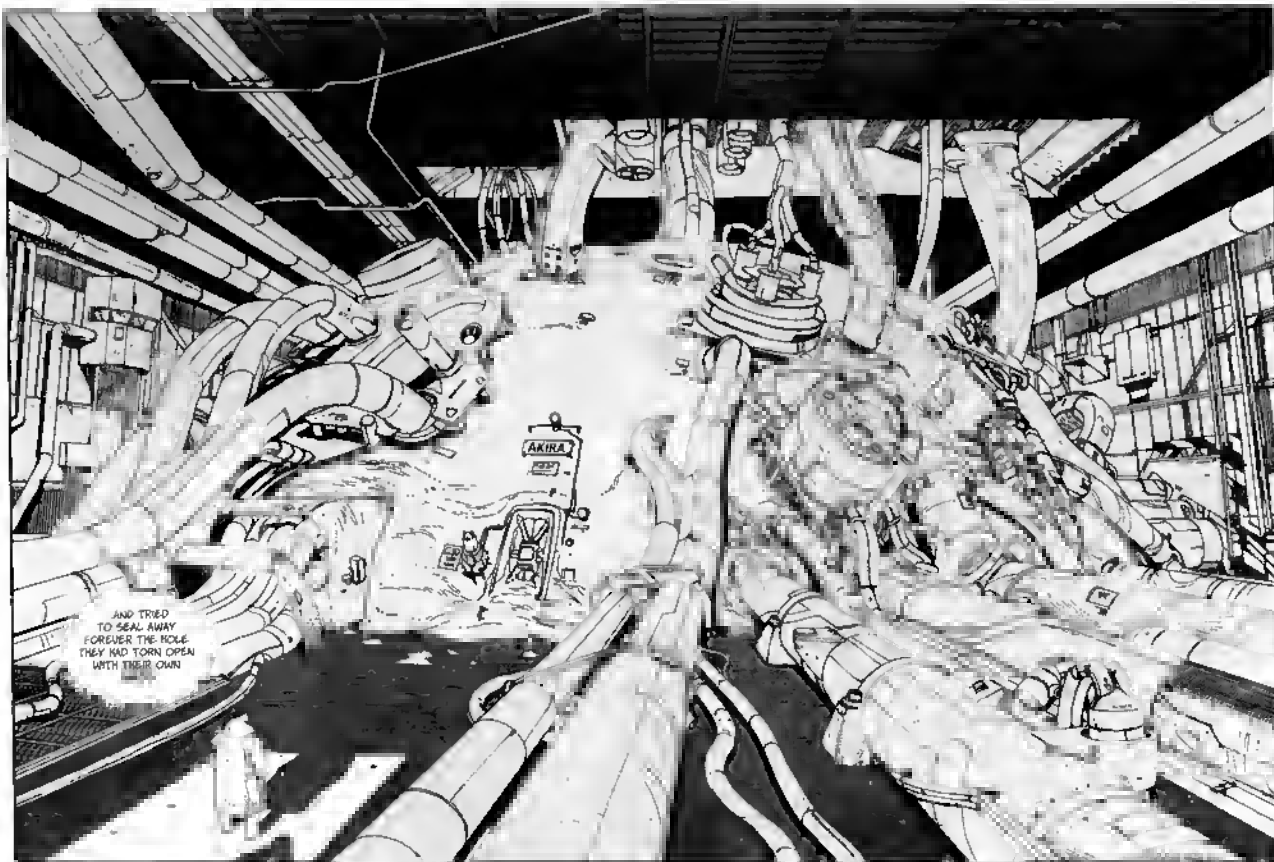




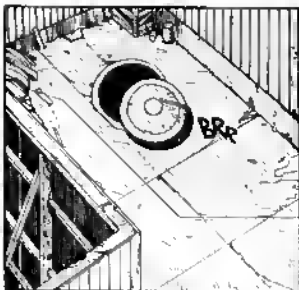


\*KELVIN: TEMPERATURE SCALE IN WHICH ABSOLUTE ZERO (-273° C) IS MEASURED AS 0°K.  
\*\*DEWAR FLASK: DOUBLE WALLS WITH INSULATED SURFACES AND A VACUUM BETWEEN.  
USED FOR THE CONTAINMENT OF EXTREME COLD.





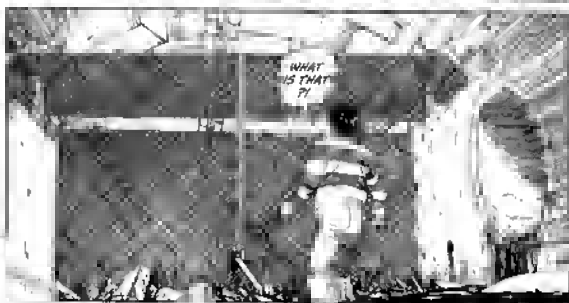
AND TRIED  
TO SEAL AWAY  
FOREVER THE HOLE  
THEY HAD TORN OPEN  
WITH THEIR OWN



HIS BIKE'S  
UNTOUCHED...  
KANEDA NEVER  
MADE IT  
HERE.













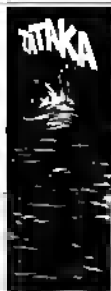
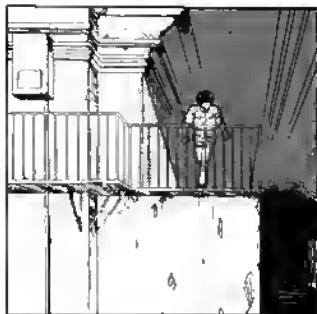




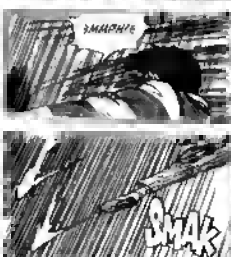


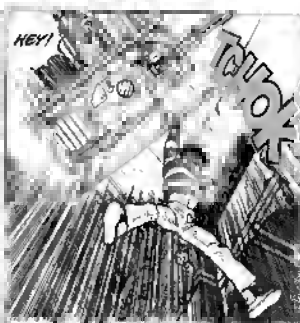






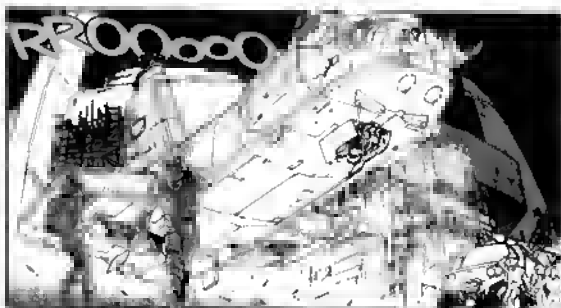
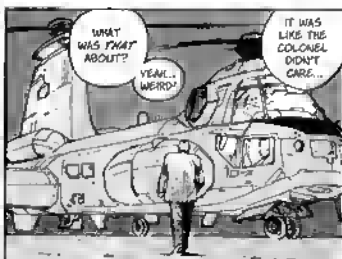


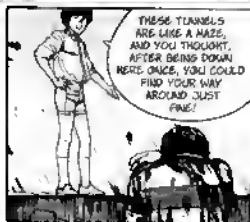
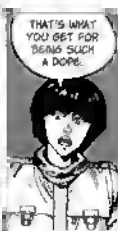




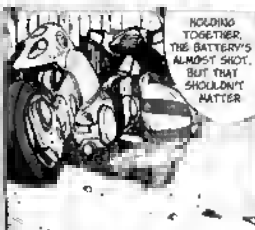










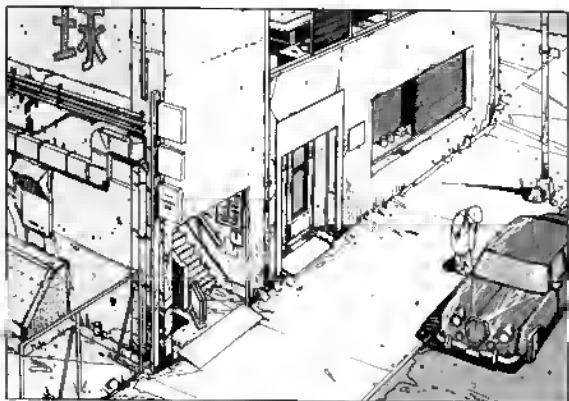








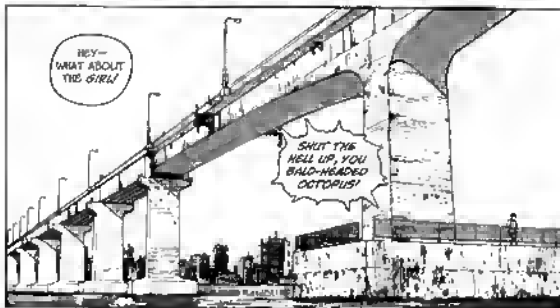




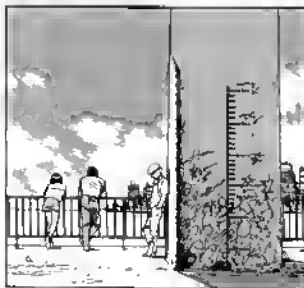




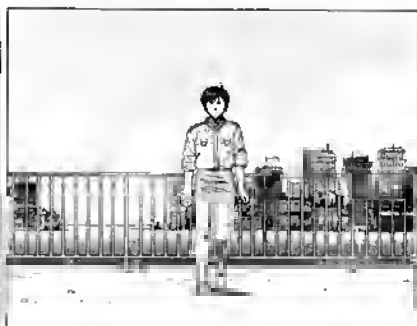
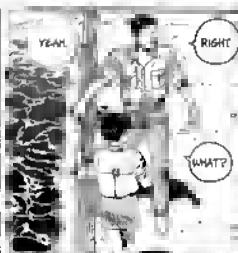


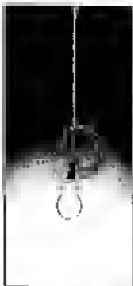


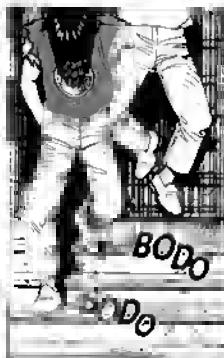






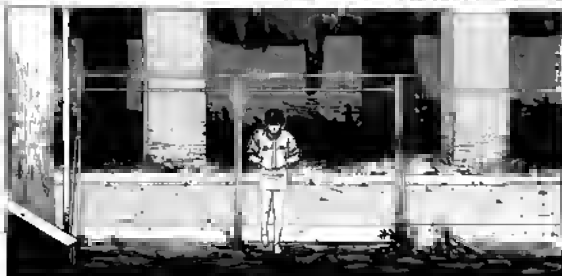
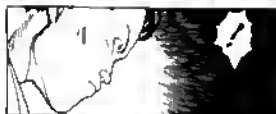


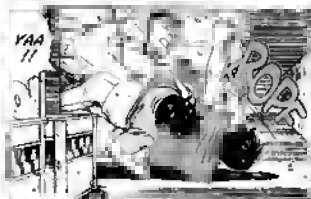
















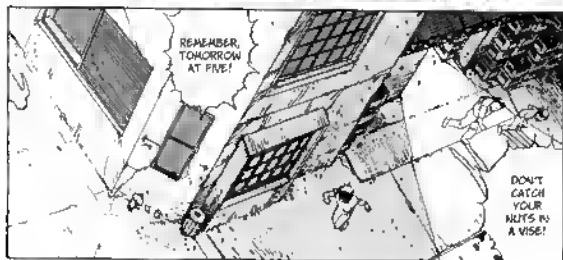




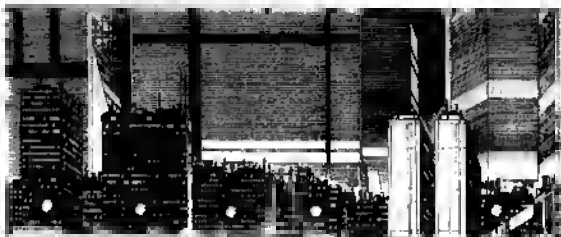












ISN'T  
THIS...



...A COPY  
OF THE  
MATERIAL  
I'VE  
ALREADY  
SEEN,  
NEZU?



IT'S A  
DIFFERENT  
COPY OF THE  
SAME INFOR-  
MATION.

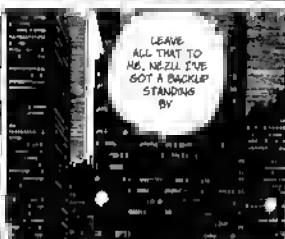
LOOK AT  
THE LOWER  
RIGHT CORNER  
OF PAGE  
EIGHT,  
RYU.

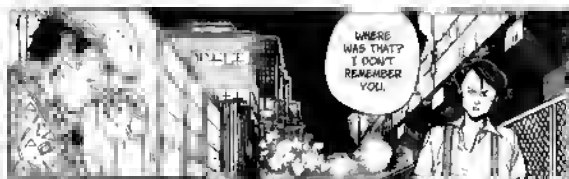


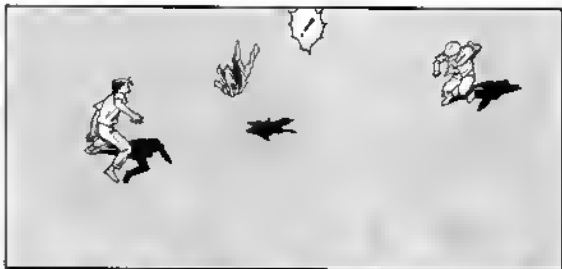
PAGE  
EIGHT?

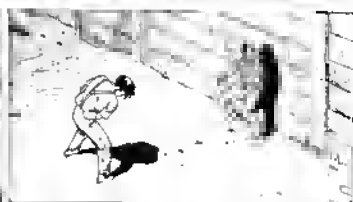
THE OWNER OF  
THIS DOCUMENT  
APPARENTLY MADE  
SOME NOTES ON  
HIS COPY.



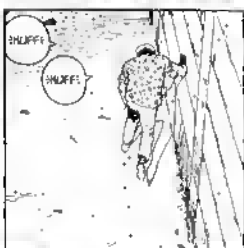
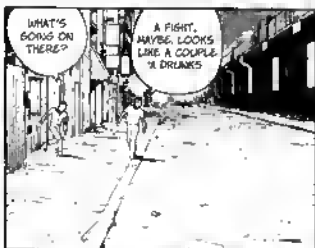


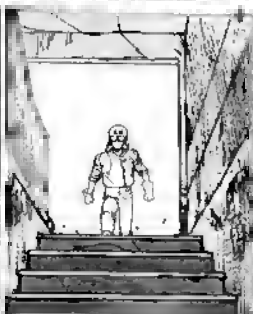
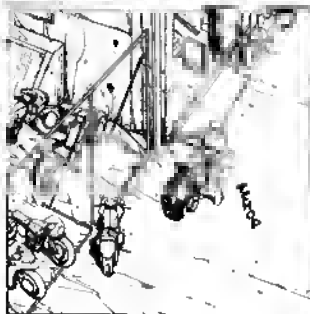


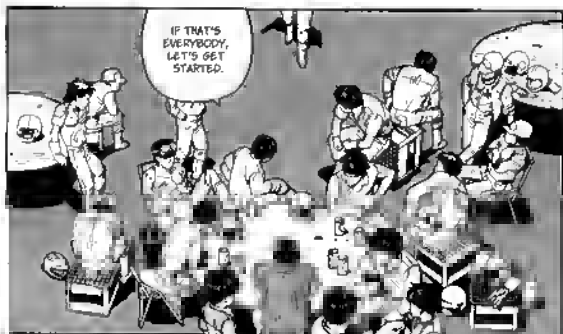




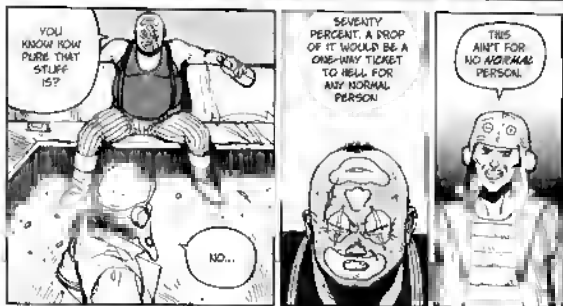


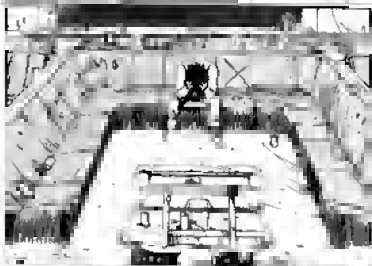
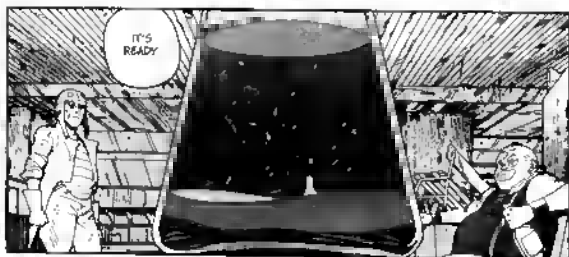














HE RIPPED A  
GUY'S HEAD  
OPEN... WITHOUT  
TOUCHING  
HIM?!



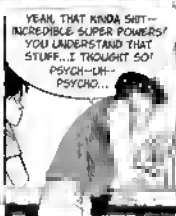
I KNEW YOU'D  
THINK I WAS  
CRAZY! THAT'S  
WHY I DIDN'T  
WANT TO TELL  
YOU!



MAKING THINGS  
MOVE AND  
EXPLODE...



YEAH, THAT KINDA SHIT --  
INCREDIBLE SUPER POWERS!  
YOU UNDERSTAND THAT  
STUFF... I THOUGHT SO!  
PSYCH--UH--  
PSYCHO...



PSYCHO-  
KINESIS.



THIS STUFF'S  
BEEN COMING  
UP A LOT  
LATELY



HOW  
FASCINATING!



I  
WANT  
TO HEAR  
MORE.



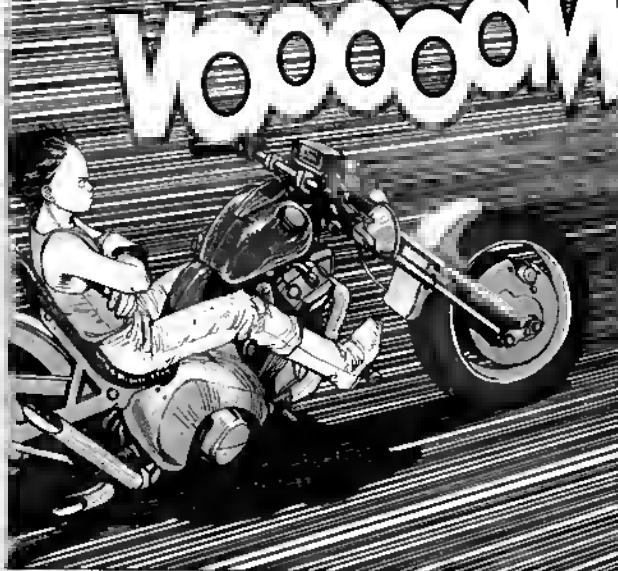
YEAH...  
ME,  
TOO.

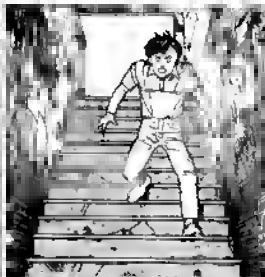




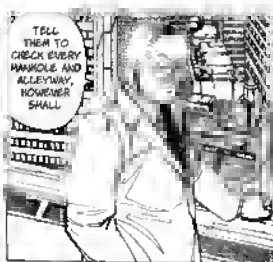




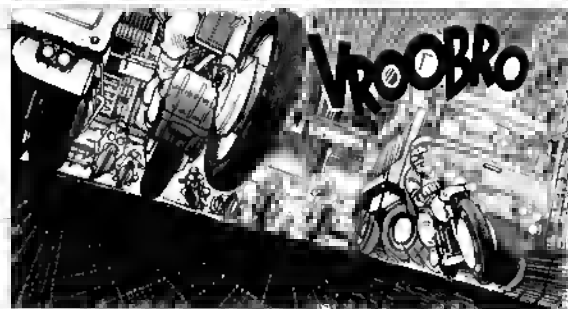


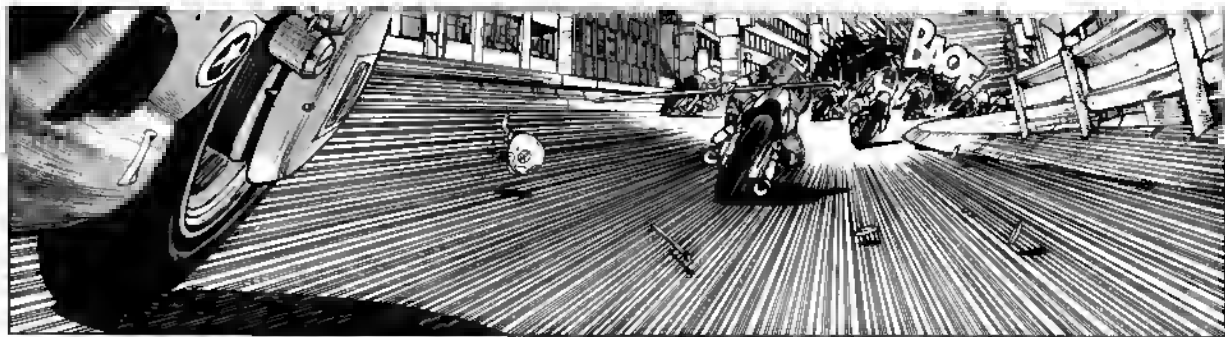






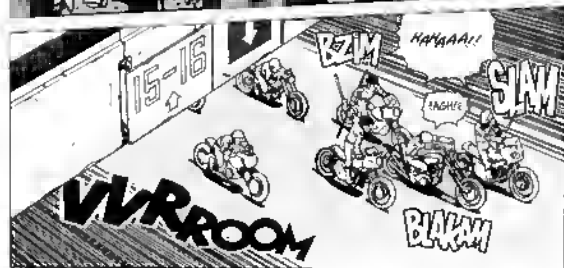


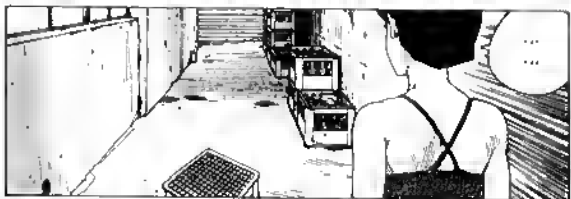


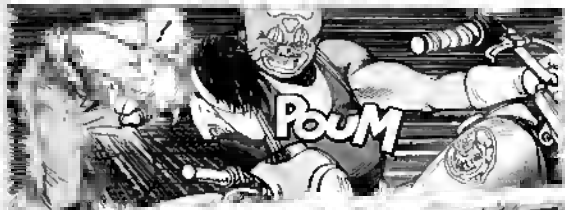


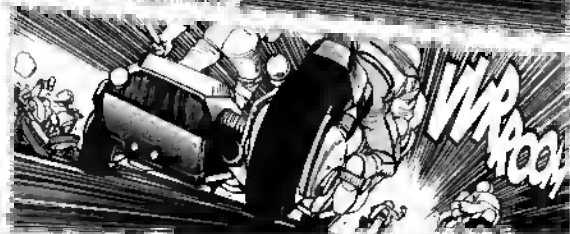


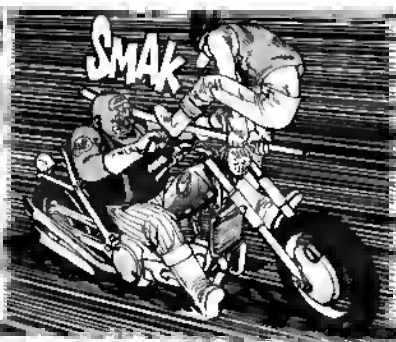


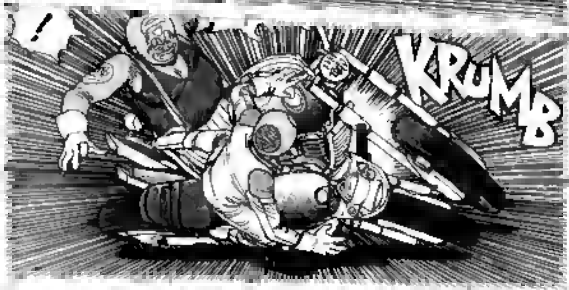
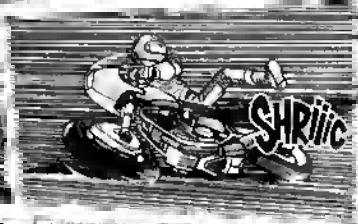








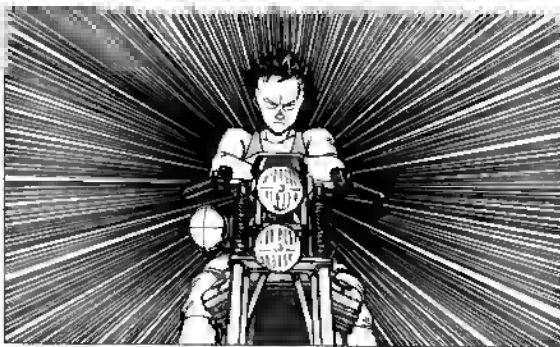


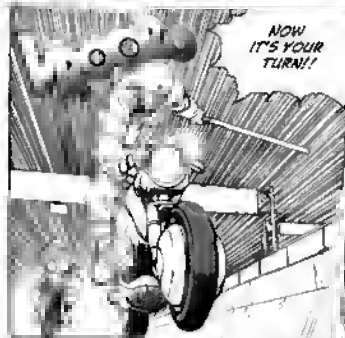
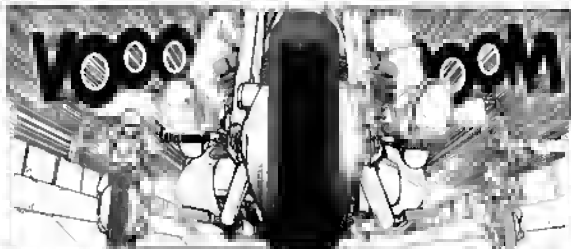


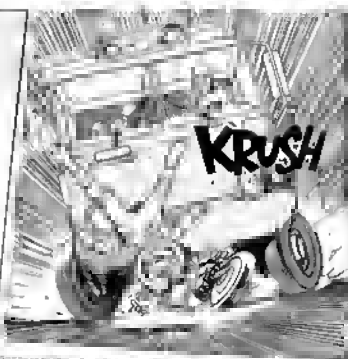


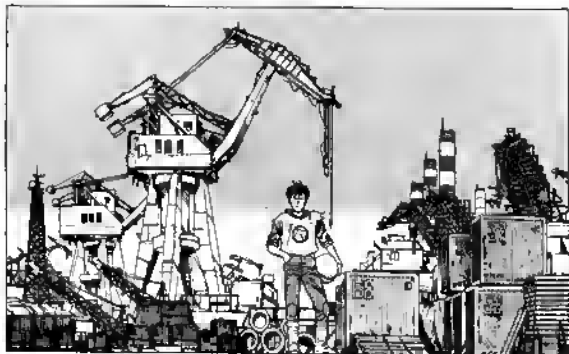








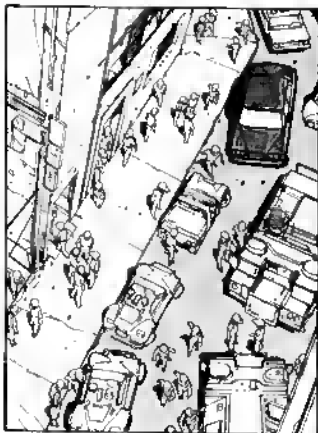






YOU  
WENT A  
LITTLE TOO  
FAR...



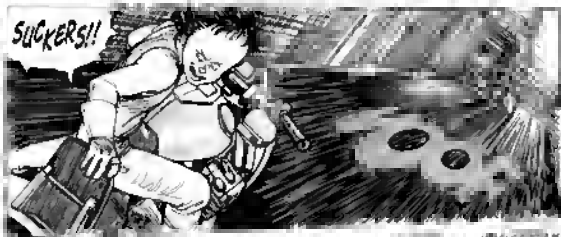


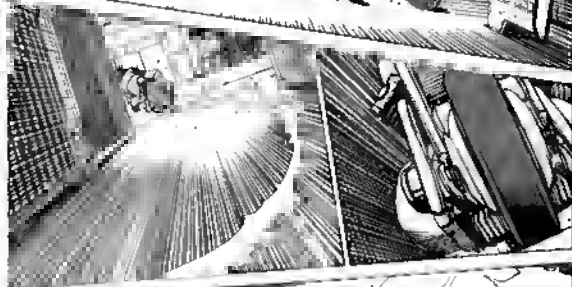




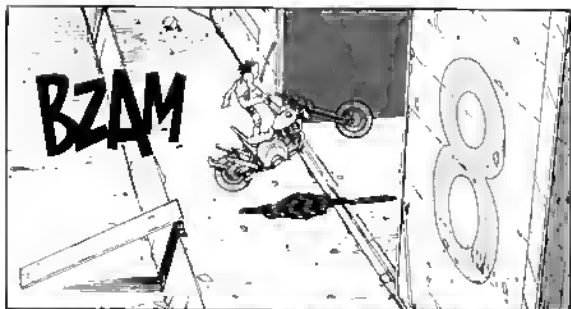












**GONG**

OKAY,  
TETSUO...  
YOUR ASS  
IS OURS!



**TZING**

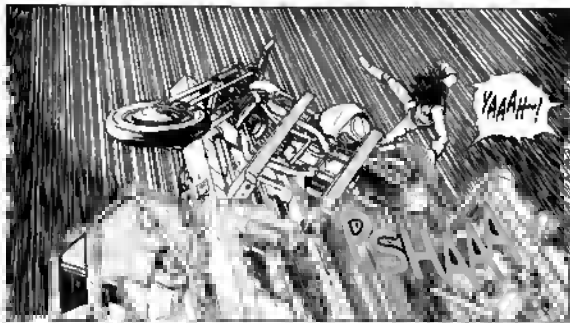
H-  
HEY...

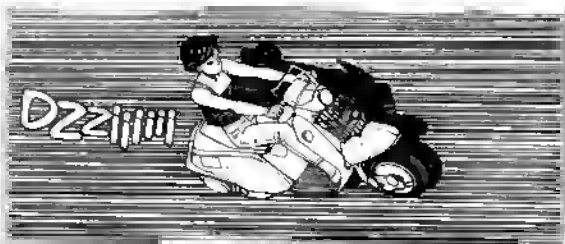
**NOW!**



**GRAABO**



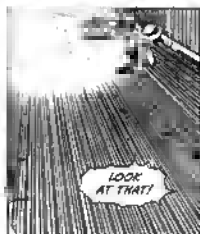






SORRY ABOUT THAT, BOYS. HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME!

















JUST LIKE  
WHEN WE  
WERE,  
KIDS!!

YOU  
ALWAYS  
HAD TO  
BE IN  
CHARGE!

**DOM**

I HEAR  
YOU'RE IN  
CHARGE NOW,  
TOO—

—OF  
A BUNCH  
OF SCUM-  
BASS



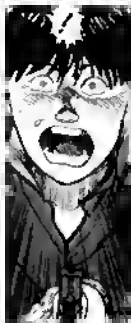
**KANEDA!**

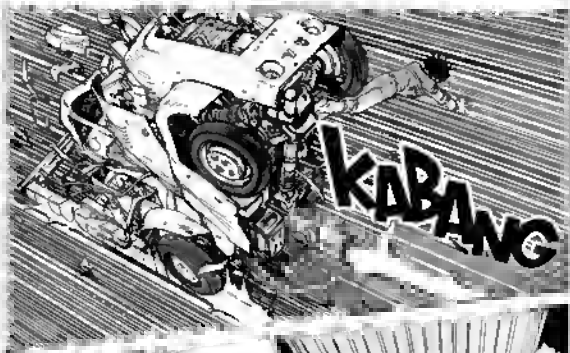


**YEAH?!**







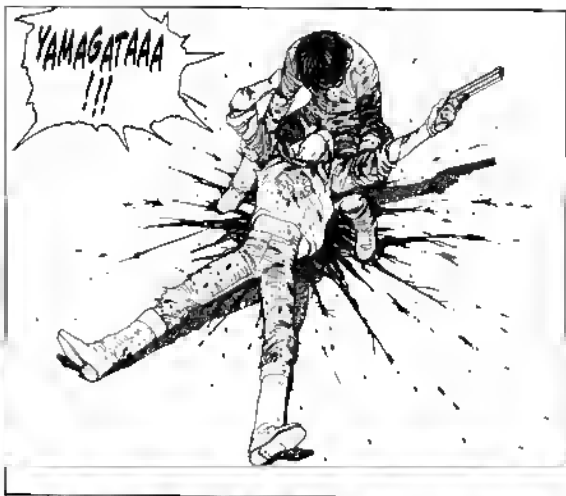








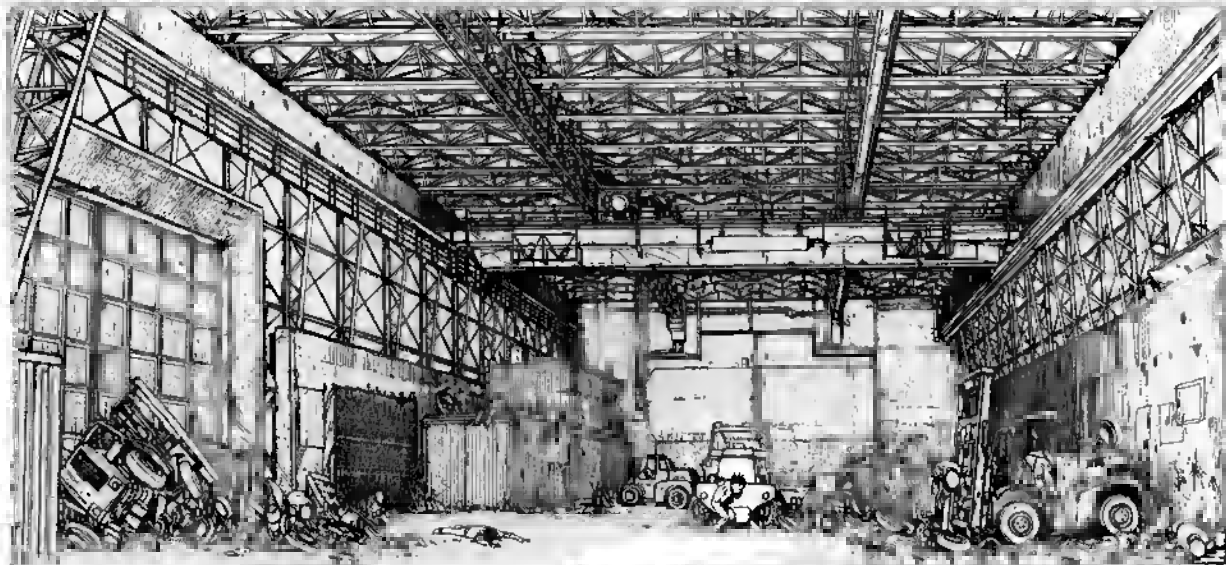










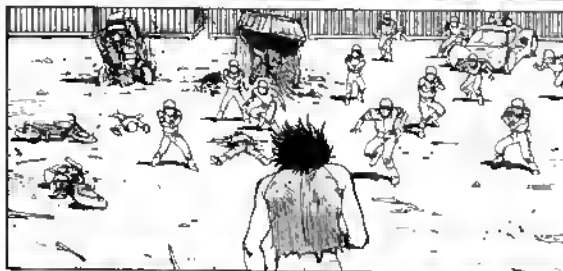




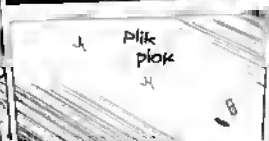




























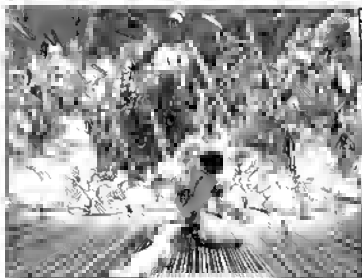




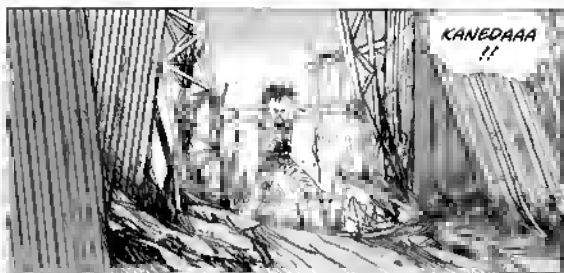


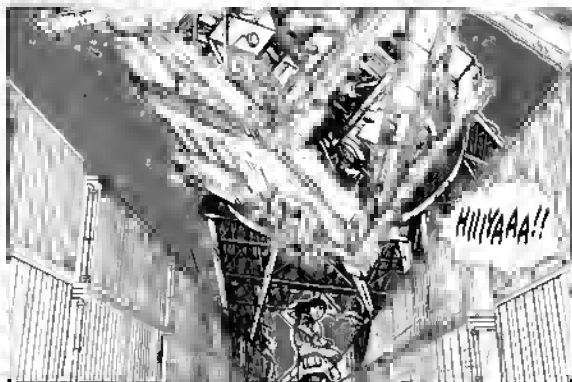
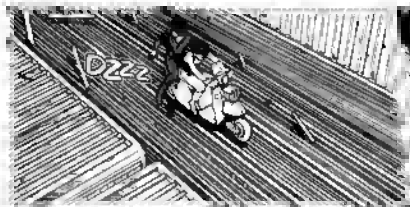






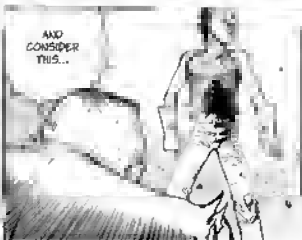
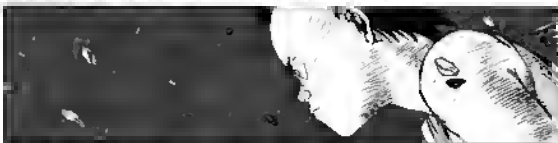
















# KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Katsuhiro Otomo was born in 1954 in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture, a rural province some 300 miles northeast of Tokyo. While in high school, Otomo became, in his own words, "crazy about the movies." The young artist often travelled three hours by train just to see films, and the influence of cinema is a constant thread that runs through Otomo's work.

Soon after graduating high school, Otomo moved to Tokyo with the goal of becoming a comics artist. His first professional work was *Ju-sei* (A Gun Report), an adaptation of the Prosper Merimée novella *Mateo Falcone*, which appeared in the weekly magazine *Action*. Otomo went on to create a series of short stories, usually twenty to thirty pages, challenging works that captured widespread critical acclaim in Japan. A 1980 review in the *Asahi* newspaper said, "Just as the New Cinema movement had demolished the old style of Hollywood filmmaking to usher in a fresh style of movie production in America, Katsuhiro Otomo...came to Tokyo to create a new comics style and shattered the conventions existing in manga."

In 1979, publication began on Otomo's first serialized work, *Fireball*, a story built around a "man versus computer" theme. Though the series was never completed, *Fireball* marked the beginning of Otomo's interest in science-fiction themes and was the forerunner of future work that would define his comics career and firmly establish him internationally as one of the acknowledged masters of the comics medium. *Domo*, first serialized in 1980 and collected in 1983, became a bestseller and was the first manga to win the coveted Science Fiction Grand Prix Award, Japan's equivalent to America's Nebula Award. The media

attention gained from this landmark achievement made Otomo one of the best-known comics authors in Japan. Critics raved about *Domo*, a story that combined terrifying paranormal genre elements with poignant observation of urban life in modern Japan. From the *Komusi* newspaper: "The weirdness that lurks in the seemingly peaceful living environment of a huge housing complex symbolizes the precariousness hidden at the bottom of today's living conditions in Japan."

Upon completion of *Domo*, Otomo began work on *Akira*, a two-thousand-plus-page epic of staggering illustrative virtuosity and gut-wrenching thematic power. Ten years in the making and eventually collected in six volumes, *Akira* went on to win every possible award and spawned video games, an animated feature film directed by Otomo himself — compared favorably by critics to science-fiction masterpieces such as *Blade Runner* and *A Clockwork Orange* — and a blizzard of merchandise. *Akira* has been published in virtually every language and stands not only as one of the crown jewels of manga, but is regarded by many as the finest work of graphic fiction ever created, anywhere. While the completion of *Akira* marked the beginning of Otomo's moving away from comics — his only major comics work since *Akira* has been the writing of *The Legend of Mother Sarah* — it began his odyssey as a filmmaker. After completion of the animated *Akira*, Otomo has gone on to work on a variety of animated films, including *Labyrinth Stories*, *Robot Carnival*, *Ranjin Z*, *Spriguan*, and *Memories*, an anthology of adaptations of earlier Otomo comics stories. Otomo also directed the live-action *World Apartment Horror* as well as television commercials for Honda, Suntory, and Canon. Otomo lives and works in Tokyo.





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# AKIRA

# 1

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